

MARTIN F. HANLEY HOUSE  
7600 Westmoreland Drive  
Clayton  
St. Louis County  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1193

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95-CLAYT,  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MARTIN F. HANLEY HOUSE

HABS No. MO-1193

ADDRESS 7600 Westmoreland Ave., Clayton, Missouri

OWNER Miss Barbara Yore, the granddaughter of M. F. Hanley

OCCUPANT Same

USE Residence for Miss Yore during her lifetime

### ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Hanley House is the oldest building in the County Seat of St. Louis County. Built in 1855 on what was then a 112 acre farm, the house has survived without major changes as a new city of 15,000 population has grown up around it. Mr. and Mrs. Hanley gave a four acre strip of land to help establish the village of Clayton when it was founded in 1878. Hanley Road, now a major street, was originally laid out as the access lane bordering the farm on the west.

Although houses of this general type (i.e., brick, two-storied, porticoed, central hall plan) were once prevalent in the St. Louis area, the Hanley House is unusual in having survived without major change and with its two-storied wood gallery extending full length along the west (rear) elevation and with the separate brick one-storey wing related to it.

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Martin Franklin Hanley was born in West Virginia and came to St. Louis County in 1837. He was a slaveholder and at one time owned about 500 acres, most of it along Olive Street Plank Road. Sometime prior to its recording in the Entries of Public Land Purchases, April 1, 1846, Hanley purchased 112.07 acres in a strip of farm land eight miles west of the St. Louis river front. The property was bounded by lines approximately between the present streets Hanley (west), Jackson (east), Stratford (north) and Wydown Blvd. (south). Selecting the highest point of the land near a fifty year oak, in 1855 he built the spacious, two-storied brick house (stone basement) and with a pedimented portico carefully oriented with a view toward St. Louis and the east. The oak tree, now five feet in diameter, still stands in the front yard lending massive dignity and interest to the house.

The Hanley family were proud and partisan secessionists during the "War between the States" and until 1938 they annually flew the Confederate flag from the portico to celebrate Jefferson Davis' birthday. Even today the present occupant, a granddaughter of M. F. Hanley, preserves an apprehension toward "Federals" which made it a problem for H.A.B.S. measurements to be recorded, since it involved the National Park Service Program. The house itself still reveals an affinity to the southern plantation home with its rear gallery and detached kitchen. It is impossible today to find the accurate location of the slave quarters, carriage house, smoke house, ice house and other out buildings, which once existed near-by.

The principal reason for the survival of the friendly old house is that it has been in the family and occupied by respectful, appreciative members since it was built. Martin Hanley died in 1879 at the age of 65, leaving the house to his wife. Their daughter, Nancy Caroline, who was born on Olive Street Road, January 11, 1841, inherited the house where, as an active, intellectual spinster, she lived until her death on December 18, 1938. "Aunt Cal's" nieces, Misses Barbara and Byrd Anne Yore came to live with her in 1917. Miss Barbara, the retired school teacher and present occupant who is nearing eighty says, "I'm trying to keep the house just as it was when I moved here".

The hilltop location of the house saved it from destructive encroachment by the projected railroad survey which detoured from its straight westerly course; the tracks

were to follow the contours and cross the southern half of the Hanley property. Although the tracks were not laid until much later, by 1878 Mr. Hanley had sold this lower portion of the original farm, and by 1909, most all of it had been subdivided into city lots and streets. (See attached map)

#### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The term "foursquare" is literally as well as figuratively descriptive of this house which has four rooms each fourteen feet square on each floor; the central hall is an even seven feet wide. The only minor alteration inside the house (aside from basement stairs) has been the inevitable addition of a bath room by closing off the front portion of the second floor stair hall which formerly led to the front portico door. At the present time, although the house is still intact and could be restored without reconstruction, it needs repairs, even for stabilization: pointing of brick work, general maintenance and painting, especially the woodwork. Apparently, for lack of available cut stone, since this kind of economy was not used elsewhere, the window lintels and sills were made of wood, the latter covered with canvas and painted to simulate stone, as were the lintels on the east elevation. As might be expected, joints in the brick work over the windows have opened and show the effects of this unorthodox construction.

The present occupant, Miss Yore, lives comfortably but does not have the means for more than minimum maintenance. Because of the location, near the business center of Clayton, her heirs would probably not wish to maintain the house and its one acre (175' x 250') plot of ground. There has been some talk, but nothing more, concerning the possible acquisition of the house for an appropriate private organizational use as headquarters (Colonial Dames, Local; Historical Society, etc., etc.)

NOTE: The house has been restored and is now a museum. It was placed on the National Register in 1976. (E. Silverman, 04/17/84)

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